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ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of a survey which was undertaken in order to develop an understanding of the University of Arkansas' environment as experienced by black students. It assessed the students' causes for leaving the university during their freshman year. Thirty-four black students who had attended school in the Fall of 1976 did not return to the University in the Spring of 1977. All of these students were contacted and 17 of the students participated in the survey. The survey included questions from various sources. Students were questioned to determine: (1) what items represented problems (a rating of the severity of the problems which they encountered as students was used), and (2) what items represented problems which caused them to leave the university with a ranking of these items. Following the rating of each item, respondents were asked to pick the 10 most important items in causing them to leave the university and to rank these 10 in the order of their importance. Results indicated that the major problem areas which emerged were quite similar to, and in many cases the same as, those problem areas which were ranked as the most important causes of dropout. In both methods of assessment students expressed a deep sense of alienation. The major focus of that alienation occurred in the classroom and with teachers. (Author/AM)

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Report on The Survey for Non-Returning Black Students in the Spring Semester, 1977

January 19, 1978

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Submitted by

The Office of Student Services

UDO 18064

In order to meet State Desegregation goals and because of more immediate humane, economic, and broad societal concerns it has become increasingly important for this University to understand the conditions for Black Student retention and dropout. With such knowledge programs of prevention and remediation can be instituted. During the 1975-1976 year the percent of Black students leaving the University in the Freshman year was 32 (Progression of Students Report, 1977). This percent was not higher than that for Caucasian Freshmen students, 39% of whom did not return, but is looked upon with serious concern because of the disproportionately small percentage of the Black population entering the University in the first place. The current percent of students at the University who are Black is approximately four while a more representative percentage (based to the availability pool) would be between nine and 13. For these reasons a decision was made to attempt to contact all Black students who did not return in the Spring semester of 1977 and investigate carefully their problems and concerns while attending the University and their reasons for leaving the University.

Few studies could be found which related to Black student persistence on this campus or nationally. An informal tabulation was done at the University of Arkansas in the Spring of 1977 by the Office of Human Relations of exit interview forms completed by students just prior to their leaving. The forms presented a relatively limited number of questions to students concerning their reasons for leaving in addition to an open ended question (see Appendix A). The tabulation of responses to these forms indicated that financial problems were "...by far the overwhelming reason for dropping out. (Taylor, Barbara. Personal Communication, January, 1978)."

The Institute for the Study of Educational Policy of Howard University reported in their Summary of Equal Educational Opportunity for Blacks in U.S. Higher Education: An Assessment in 1975 that there was "...no regular national collection of data on dropout or transfer rates of minorities in U.S. higher education (p. 10)," and, at the present time there is still no national clearinghouse for collection of data on Black student dropout according to The Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. Thus, no comparison statistics could be found. However, it is possible to note that the University of Arkansas compares somewhat unfavorably with the nation (though it should be noted that some of the schools involved have differing admissions policies) where percentage of all students persisting through to completion of four years of higher education is concerned. Approximately 70 percent of University of Arkansas students do not persist (extrapolating from the 1977 Progression of Students Report) while 60 percent nationally do not complete the four years according to a recent Carnegie Commission report. Of course, such numbers do not by themselves reveal the totality of their significance or meaning. However, it should be safe to say that whatever factors are determining the majority and overall percentage of dropout will most likely also be influencing Black student dropout, though Black students may have additional difficulties and enter with a greater need for and desire to complete a degree than Caucasian students. The Howard report (above) at least found data suggesting that Black students had "...higher educational

aspirations than white students (p. 13)." The purpose of this study then, is to help develop a better understanding of the University environment as experienced by Black students and of their assessment of the causes for their leaving the University of Arkansas during the Freshman year.

Method

Subjects Thirty-four Black students did not return to the University of Arkansas in the Spring of 1977, having attended this University during the Fall of 1976. The decision was made to attempt to contact and survey all of these non-returning students. Ultimately 17 of these students participated. In the original sample 22 were men and 12 were women. Among the 17, 11 were men and 6 were women. Four of the 17 came from the country or towns of 2,500 or less, five came from towns of 2,500 - 10,000 population, three from towns of 10,000-25,000 population and five from towns over 25,000 in population. The 17 were enrolled in 12 Departments representing four colleges. Eleven had been enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences, three in Education, two in Business, and one in Agriculture. The mean GPA of the 17 subjects was 2.27 and the median GPA was 2.0.

Five of the subjects indicated they were in their Freshman year, four in their Sophomore year, two in their Junior year, three in their Senior year (one of whom graduated and therefore was included in only one aspect of the study relating to the problems and concerns experienced while a student at the University of Arkansas), and three were non-returning, non-graduating Graduate students.

Instrumentation The Survey (University of Arkansas Confidential Survey for Non-Returning Students) was composed of questions from various sources. Those questions from the Student Needs Survey which were believed to be important to Black students due to the response of 26 Black students surveyed in the Fall of 1976 were utilized in addition to modified versions of questions found on the exit interview form (OCR 2000B6--Reasons for Students Not Returning to Higher Education Programs) referred to above. Many questions were composed based on findings of the Report of the President's Committee on Minority Needs and Concerns. Finally, a WICHE Survey for Non-returning Students was utilized for suggestions as to item content, ranking method and structure of survey.

The questions represented nine dimensions (see Table 1) but were randomly scattered among one another so that any tendency for students to mark all items of a dimension in a uniform fashion due to their contiguity would be prevented. There were two open ended questions.

Students were questioned in such fashion as to determine 1) what items represented problems, and a rating of the severity of the problem, which they encountered while they were students, and 2) what items represented problems which caused them to leave the University and a ranking of these items. In the first manner of questioning, each item could be rated subjectively from "Not a problem" to a "Major Problem" with two (Minor and Moderate) grades in between.

Thus, following the rating of each item, respondents were asked to pick the 10 most important items in causing them to leave the University and to rank

these 10 in the order of their importance (a complete survey may be acquired at the University of Arkansas Office of Student Services).

Procedure A survey form and introductory letter (see Appendix B) were sent in the last week of May, 1977 to each of the 34 students described above. Four students responded within the following two weeks and a follow-up letter with an additional survey form and letter (Appendix B) was sent to the remaining 30 students. Four students responded to this follow-up and a third letter with surveys were sent to the remaining 26 students. Two more responses were gained and so in the month of November telephone calls were made by the Minority Advisor to the latest known addresses of all 24 non-responding subjects. Some needed additional survey forms. All who could be reached said they would return the survey immediately but still several did not do so. In these cases (seven) the Minority Advisor called the non-returning students and surveyed the respondent by telephone. Seventeen students either did not have telephones or could not be located.

RESULTS

For purposes of analysis items were grouped within each of the nine dimensions of the survey (self completion items not included here). Two respondents gave no subjective ratings except to item 3. due to their extreme illness (further explained below). Thus, the means of all the dimensions except the Health dimension were arrived at with an n of 15 (see Table 1).

Mean Ratings of Individual Items With a lowest possible mean rating of 1.0 and a highest possible of 4.0, the highest rated items were three, each of which had a mean of 2.93. These items concerned in two cases, teachers in the classroom, one stating that they had preconceived ideas about Black students' ability to achieve, and one stating that they had an "obvious dislike for Black students." The third item with a mean rating of 2.93 stated that the respondent "often felt tense or anxious." A fourth item's mean was very close to the top three and stated that teachers in the classroom lacked understanding of cultural differences ($\bar{x}$ = 2.90). The item with the next highest mean (2.80) stated that the respondent found academic advising in general to be poor, and a sixth item stated that there were "not enough Black counselors" ($\bar{x}$ = 2.73).

Six additional items seemed to represent problems of relative importance to most of these students. These were:

1. lack of information about job availability in various career areas ($\bar{x}$ = 2.67
2. did not gain practical experience in school ($\bar{x}$ = 2.60),
3. grading system--discriminatory against Blacks ($\bar{x}$ = 2.53),
4. anxiety when taking tests ($\bar{x}$ = 2.53),
5. need help in developing study skills ($\bar{x}$ = 2.47), and
6. math anxiety and low assessment of math ability ($\bar{x}$ = 2.40) (see Table 1 for means of remaining items).

It should be noted that one item received no ratings above 1.00. That item stated that the student had considered suicide.

Mean Ratings of Item Content Groupings In comparing the means of item groups (grouped according to item content) or dimensions, the dimension labeled "Lack of Racial/Cultural Awareness in the Classroom" ($\bar{x}$=2.52) was found to be above the remaining dimensions. The next highest dimension mean was 2.40 for the "Quality of Advising" items.

Of intermediate importance as problem areas were the dimensions concerning "Major and Career Choice" ($\bar{x}$=2.27) and "Lack of Black Cultural Programs and Activities" ($\bar{x}$=2.23).

Overall relative Minor Problem status was assigned by respondents to the dimensions concerning "Self Adequacy" ($\bar{x}$=2.05) (see above individual item exceptions), "Quality and Appropriateness of Support Services" ($\bar{x}$=2.02), and "Health" ($\bar{x}$=1.93).

Problem areas of "Environmental Management" ($\bar{x}$=1.43) and "Religious Concerns" ($\bar{x}$=1.33) were generally rated as "Not a Problem."

Item Rank of Importance in Causing Dropout Each respondent was asked to rank order the 10 items most important in causing them to leave the University. When all responses were combined, forty-three of the 54 items appeared at least once among the top 10 reasons and thirty of the 54 items were ranked at least once among the top three items. The items appearing among the top three when all individual responses were combined were: 5. (six times), 53. (three times), 3., 17., 20., 27., 47., 51., 54. (twice), and 2., 7., 8., 12., 13., 14., 15., 18., 19., 21., 26., 28., 30., 32., 33., 34., 35., 44., 46., 48., 50. (once).

Items 4., 6., 9., 22., 23., 31., 37., 40., 41., 43., 49. never appeared among any respondent's top 10 reasons for leaving school. Five of these nine items are in the Environmental Management Grouping (10 total items).

So that a numerical comparison of item ranks could be obtained and placed in order according to a sum of the precise rankings each item had received, each ranking for each item was given a reverse weighting (highest in 10=10, lowest = one) and the weightings for individual items were summed. The figures thereby obtained are presented in Table 3.

One item (5. I was discouraged by the White teachers' lack of understanding of our cultural differences [resulting in such problems as test essay questions being graded down because of lack of conventional writing skills]) obtained a weighted rank sum (65) well above all of the other items. The next highest ranking was 38 for item 47. which again concerned teachers in the classroom and in this case, perceived "...obvious dislike for Black students." The third most important item as a cause for Black student dropout was ranked very close to the second highest item (w.s. rank= 37) and stated that there were not enough Black counselors. Finally the fourth highest ranked item also concerned teachers in the classroom and stated that greater out-of-class attention was given to White students (w.s. rank= 35). Thus, among the top four items, three came from the "Lack of Racial-Cultural Awareness in the Classroom" grouping. From this group of eight items one additional item was found among the 16 items which had weighted rank sums higher

Table 1
Mean Ratings for Individual Items and for Content Groupings

Item number	Item identity	Mean rating (n=15)	Group mean rating
	Major and Career Choice		
1.	lack of adequate information about majors and careers to make an informed choice	2.07	
11.	lacked adequate information about self to choose a career	2.07	
28.	school work not relevant to real world	1.93	2.27
29.	lack of information about job availability in various career areas	2.67	
48.	did not gain practical experience in school	2.60	
	Health		
3.	physical ailments interferred with school work (n=17 on this item only)	1.65	1.93
39.	lack of proper nutrition in diet	2.20	
	Lack of Racial/Cultural Awareness in the Classroom		
5.	teachers in classroom--lack of understanding of cultural differences	2.90	
17.	teachers in classroom--greater out of class attention given to white students	2.40	
24.	reluctance to ask questions in classroom due to fear of belittling by teachers	2.79	
30.	not enough black instructors	2.67	2.52
38.	students in classroom--racial discrimination	1.87	
45.	teachers in classroom--preconceived ideas about black students' ability to achieve	2.93	
47.	teachers in classroom--obvious dislike for black students	2.93	
52.	grading system--discriminatory against blacks	2.53	

Item number	Item identity	Mean rating (n=15)	Group mean rating
	Environmental Management		
6.	inadequate child care	1.07	
7.	financial difficulties interferred	1.60	
15.	marriage interferred with continuing school	1.27	
23.	pregnancy interferred with continuing school	1.07	
25.	job interferred with continuing school	1.40	1.43
43.	more physical fitness programs needed	1.87	
46.	parents are a problem	1.53	
49.	transportation difficulties	1.40	
4.	inability to find part-time work	1.53	
31.	roommate conflict	1.53	
	Religious Concerns		
9.	religious concerns not adequately handled	1.33	1.33
	Lack of Black Cultural Programs and Activities		
18.	programmed social activities--predominantly oriented toward white students	2.13	2.23
20.	small black population resulting in poor representation in activities and in student governance	2.33	
	Quality and Appropriateness of Support Services		
8.	kind and quantity of individual help not appropriate--though received counseling or study skills help	2.20	
22.	head residents and assistants--not friendly and unable to relate to black students	1.73	2.02
37.	financial aid--racial discrimination	1.33	
40.	campus student employment--racial discrimination	1.93	
51.	not enough black counselors	2.73	

Item number	Item identity	Mean rating (n=15)	Group mean rating
Self Adequacy			
2.	worry about grades though performance adequate	2.20	
10.	concern for personal safety	2.00	
12.	poor reading and comprehension skills due to poor educational background	1.87	
13.	anxiety when taking tests	2.53	
14.	little hope of improving performance due to low or failing grades	1.87	
16.	course load too heavy for educational background	1.47	
			2.05
19.	lack of adequate writing skills	2.00	
33.	difficulty in significant relationships	1.87	
34.	math anxiety and low assessment of math ability	2.40	
36.	often depressed	2.27	
41.	considered suicide	1.00	
42.	cannot make decisions	1.87	
44.	often tense or anxious	2.93	
50.	need help in developing study skills	2.47	
Quality of Advising			
21.	academic advising--lacking in adequate information about counseling, study skills, and/or tutoring	2.13	
26.	academic advisor--lack of understanding about needs of the black student	2.27	
27.	poor academic advising in general	2.80	2.40
32.	did not see an advisor often enough	2.27	
35.	lack of information about fules, regulations and academic procedures	2.27	

than 20. That item concerned the teachers' preconceived ideas about Black students' ability to achieve (w.r. sum= 25). The item concerning need for more Black counselors was one of two items with a total ranking over 20 which came from The Quality and Appropriateness of Support Services Content group.

Three items from the five item "Quality of Advising" grouping were found among the top 16, with item 27. (Academic advising in general was poor.) being evaluated as most important in causing dropout in that grouping. Item 27. received the fifth highest summed weighted rankings of all items.

The item with the sixth highest summed weighted ranking was 44. (I often felt tense or anxious) as a reason for leaving school. Two other items of this 14 item "Self Adequacy" grouping appeared among the top 16. These were: 34. (I was anxious about the idea of taking Math and believed I would not do well in that subject) which was 9th among the summed weighted rankings, and 13. (I was extremely anxious or tense when taking tests and did very poorly mainly due to nervousness) which was 12th. It should be noted that among the 14 items of this grouping these were the only three which indicated that being nervous or tense or anxious was a central part of the problem.

The seventh highest ranked item was a self completion blank which asked for problems not covered by the questionnaire. Only three respondents listed additional problems in these blanks. However, when additional problems were listed they were also ranked either first (two respondents) or second (one respondent). One respondent felt that there "should be activities for Black people--(so that) "Black people (would not be left) standing in little groups on campus." Another wrote, "U of A felt socially and academically isolated. Never personally got past that. Not sure the University system can 'fix' that." Finally, a third respondent said, "Teachers determine grades for Black students before they get to know them."

The eighth ranked item was from the dimension concerning Major and Career Choice.

Only one item remains among the top ranked 16 and this was an item which stated that physical ailments interferred with school work. It was discovered via a letter and telephone call that two students suffered from terminal illnesses. One has since died. They each gave item 3. a highest ranking.

Individual Item Correlates of Highest Ranked Items Due to the low n of 15, an arbitrary decision was made to present here only interitem correlations of $\pm$ .60 and greater in relation to the top six of the highest ranked items reported above. The highest ranked item 5., concerning teachers' lack of understanding of cultural differences between Black students and White students, was found to correlate negatively (r=.69) with an item concerning mathematics anxiety and low assessment of mathematics ability. The same item (5.) was found to correlate positively with two other items which concerned teachers in the classroom; one (45.) reporting preconceived ideas about Black students' ability to achieve (r=.65) and one (47.) concerning the teachers' dislike for Black students (r=.64). This latter item (47.) was the second highest ranked item and was also (in addition to its correlation with item 5.) found to correlate highly with item 45. (described above) and with an item (13.) which reported extreme anxiety when taking tests and doing poorly mainly due to nervousness (r=.68).

Table 2
Rankings for Items Receiving a Summed Reverse Ranking of 21 or Higher

Item		Weighted Rank Sum (n=16)
5.	teachers in classroom--lack of understanding of cultural differences	65*
47.	teachers in classroom--obvious dislike for black students	38
51.	not enough black counselors	37
17.	teachers in classroom--greater out of class attention given to white students	35
27.	poor academic advising in general	33
44.	often tense or anxious	30
53.	discrimination problems not covered in questionnaire--self completion	29
48.	did not gain practical experience in school	26
34.	math anxiety and low assessment of math ability	25
45.	teachers in classroom--preconceived ideas about black students' ability to achieve	25
8.	kind and quantity of individual help not appropriate--though received counseling or study skills help	23
13.	anxiety when taking tests	22
35.	lack of information about rules, regulations and academic procedures	22
21.	academic advising--lacking in adequate information about counseling, study skills, and/or turoring	22
3.	physical ailments--interfered with school work	21
30.	not enough black instructors	21

* Higher weightings represent higher (more important) rank. Each respondent's highest ranked item received 10 points, next highest, 9 points, etc.

Thus an item concerning a specific low assessment of self ability (mathematics) and associated anxiety was found to correlate negatively with perceptions of discrimination by teachers in the classroom, while an item concerning only general test anxiety and no low assessment of the student's ability, was found to correlate positively with perceptions of discrimination by teachers in the classroom.

The third highest ranked item (51.) which indicated that there were not enough Black counselors was found to correlate above .60 and positively with three items. The first concerned often feeling tense or anxious (r=.69), the second (48.) concerned not gaining practical experience in school (r=.64), and the third (52.) indicated that the grading system was discriminatory towards Blacks (r=.72).

The fourth highest ranked item also concerned teachers in the classroom but indicated greater out-of-class attention to White students than to Black students. This item correlated greater than .60 with only one item. That item (28.) indicated that school work was not relevant to the real world (r=.62).

The fifth highest ranked item (27.) concerning poor academic advising in general related to two items already reported as correlating positively and above .60 with high ranking items. These two items were 28. (lack of relevancy of school work to the real world) (r=.60) and 44. which stated that the student often felt tense or anxious (r=.62). This latter item was in turn the sixth highest ranked item. In addition to the just reported relationships with the fifth highest ranked item and the third highest ranked items, this item concerning general tension and anxiety was also found to relate positively and above .60 to the belief that school work was not relevant to the real world (item 28., r=.66) and with an item (36.) stating that the non-returning student often felt depressed (r=.69).

Individual Item Correlates of Grade Point Average Three items were found to correlate at $\pm$.50 or greater with grade point average. Negative correlations were found for two "lack of information" items, one concerning lack of information about counseling, study skills and, or, tutoring (r=.65) and the other concerning lack of information about rules, regulations and academic procedures (r= -.66). A high positive correlation (r=.53) was found for an item stating that a job interferred with continuing school.

Interpretation Additional information could be gained through the available data of this study through more sophisticated analysis. We have not provided that time-consuming analysis due to the low number of subjects, though the University of Arkansas statistician, Dr. James Dunn, states that he believes that the subjects are an adequate number and proportion of the population to be representative. The reader should be cautioned, however, that without the use of more sophisticated statistical techniques the data may be somewhat misleading, particularly where the summed rankings are concerned. For example, as Dr. Dunn has pointed out, we cannot assume that there is "...one consistent ordering of the reasons why people drop out." He further suggests that "...there may be several internally consistent orderings possible, each relevant to a particular subpopulation."

We hope to establish a means whereby all students who leave the University are surveyed prior to leaving. If this were accomplished our numbers would be substantial enough to examine the orderings of subpopulations as suggested. Based on another of Dr. Dunn's suggestions we may also wish to re-examine the assignment of scores to rank (so that, for example, higher ranks might receive additional points).

Table 3
Item Correlations ($\pm$.60 and greater) for Each of the Top Six Highest Ranked Individual Items (from Table 2)

Item	Item correlate	Correlation coefficient
	34. math anxiety--and low assessment of math ability	-.69
5. teachers in the classroom--lack of understanding of cultural differences	45. teachers in classroom--preconceived idea about Black students' ability to achieve	.65
	47. teachers in the classroom--obvious dislike for Black students	.64
	5. teachers in the classroom--lack of understanding of cultural differences	.64
47. teachers in the classroom--obvious dislike of Black students	13. anxiety when taking tests	.68
	45. teachers in classroom--preconcieved idea about Black students' ability to achieve	.61
	44. often felt tense or anxious	.69
	48. did not gain practical experience in school	.64
51. not enough Black counselors	52. grading system--discriminatory against Blacks	.72
17. teachers in the classroom--greater out-of-class attention given to white students	28. school work not relevant to real world	
	28. school work not relevant to the real world	.60
27. poor academic advising in general	44. often felt tense or anxious	.62
	27. poor academic advising in general	.62
44. often tense or anxious	28. school work not relevant to real world	.66
	36. often felt depressed	.70
	51. not enough Black counselors	.69

Table 4
Item Correlation with Grade Point Average ($\pm$ .50 and greater)

Item number	Correlation coefficient
21. lacking in adequate information about counseling, study skills and, or, tutoring	-.65
25. job interferred with continuing school	.53
35. lack of inforamtion about rules, regulations and academic procedures	-.66

DISCUSSION

When nonreturning students provided a subjective evaluation of the items as problems of concern to them while they were students at the University of Arkansas, the major problem areas which emerged were quite similar to, and in many cases were the same as, those problem areas which were ranked as the most important causes of dropout. In both methods of assessment students expressed a deep sense of alienation with the major focus of that alienation being in the classroom and with teachers. They felt that they, because of their racial origin were viewed with certain expectations where achievement was concerned, actively disliked and were not understood in light of cultural differences. They believed that teachers gave greater out-of-class attention to white students and this was a major reason for leaving. The respondents' focus would seem to be related to the obvious situational components in which teachers are the figures of authority, knowledge-ability and evaluative power, with the classroom being the place where success or failure would occur.

The high anxiety reported in general and when taking tests would seem to indicate that the students may have had bad interactions with teachers in the past or other experiences which led them to be fearful in the present situation. Certainly, bad learning experiences of the past may have in turn influenced current perceptions of teachers and their attitudes. However, these students seemed to be very alert toward the teachers' attitude and apparently saw little convincing evidence in this environment to lead them to believe that those attitudes were positive toward themselves or any different than those previously experienced.

When the classroom feelings and perceptions are taken together with the reported inadequate advising experiences, too few Black counselors, anxiety and lack of practical experience or information about job availability in career areas, a rather clear picture emerges. It would seem that these students' sense of belongingness was profoundly in question. Supportive help from advisors and counselors was not forthcoming and anxiety increased in the classroom corresponding with the perceptions of not being understood, being discounted and disliked. Of course, feeling one's self to be an outsider could only be accentuated by having too little information to establish career related purpose and goals for being at the University. Under such circumstances, any person could be expected to feel anxious (particularly when under pressure to perform competitively), to lack motivation, to be depressed and (hopefully!) to seek a different environment. It seems to this author that certain programs, if instituted and well coordinated through a cooperative faculty and student services relationship, could greatly alleviate the problems experienced by these Black nonreturning students. We should attempt, at least, to match our educational support services and to some extent our academic programs specifically to their needs. First, it seems apparent that all Freshmen faculty must be educated as to the feelings and perceptions of Black students if we are to retain higher proportions of those students. This could be accomplished through dissemination of information about Black students to faculty via Department Heads and Deans. The focus of this first stage, then, is an attempt to raise awareness.

Secondly, faculty need to know how to communicate their acceptance of and positive expectations for Black students. Human Relations Training has been provided in the past but was not in fact attended by faculty. Thus, strong adminis-

trative encouragement is needed so that these programs, when provided again will be attended and work to improve the human environment.

Third, students themselves need to receive training to better manage their anxiety. These programs are currently available but could be expanded upon and better publicized.

Fourth, an Orientation to the University course which gave emphasis to information on careers and majors, required in the Freshman year, would clearly have major impact on our retention rate. Students who have no way of knowing the relevance of their studies to the real world and no goals for which to work or from which to derive a sense of motivation can only be expected to lose interest and seek a more meaningful activity.

Through an Orientation to the University course students could be given campus resource information as well as information on careers and majors. In such a course, Black students and others as well could have many possible careers described, better understand what sorts of knowledge are needed to develop competence in various areas, better evaluate their own abilities and interests and meet with Black professional representatives with whom they might identify and develop ideas and images about their possible futures--making those futures worth working for.

Fifth, a university wide cooperative effort should be made to develop a peer counseling and advising program. This program could help counter the feelings of alienation, give immediate purpose and meaningfulness to upperclass students and the needed information and support to the incoming students. The peer counseling program could be developed through the following steps:

1. All teachers, counselors and advisors encourage Black students to enter the Student Leadership Development Course where relationship skills are practiced and resource information is presented.
2. Departments request additional funds for the purpose of hiring the above trained (paraprofessional) students (many of whom may be eligible for work study funding).
3. Hire and assign each paraprofessional to a limited number of incoming Black Freshmem. Supervise their work in varied activities (tutoring, referral, peer counseling) with the emphasis depending upon the paraprofessional's special skills and interests.

Of course, if we wish to reduce the dropout rate, academic support services must continue. The low GPA's of most of the nonreturning students are due to many factors but immediate help usually requires special attention to learning and academic content. Finally, an increase in Black students as well as Black faculty and staff should help modify the alienation currently felt.

APPENDIX A

OCR 200086 – REASONS FOR STUDENTS NOT RETURNING TO HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS | PART I. UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL | PAGE NO. 1 | NUMBER OF PAGES 2

STUDENTS NOT RETURNING *	LINE NO.	RACE/ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION AND SEX													
		BLACK (not of Hispanic origin)		AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE		ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER		HISPANIC		WHITE (not of Hispanic origin)		TOTAL			
		MALE (1)	FEMALE (2)	MALE (3)	FEMALE (4)	MALE (5)	FEMALE (6)	MALE (7)	FEMALE (8)	MALE (9)	FEMALE (10)	MALE (11)	FEMALE (12)	MALE AND FEMALE (13)	
A. NUMBER NOT RETURNING (from sum of all lines "1s" in OCR [illegible]) Check to indicate whether this is total number [ ] or total of sample [ ]	1	3	5							286	180				
B. NUMBER TO BE REPORTED HERE (same as A, unless sampling is used)	2														
C. STUDENTS WHO WITHDREW IN ORDER TO ENROLL IN ANOTHER POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION	3									20	14				
D. ACADEMIC FAILURE	4														
E. PRINCIPAL REASON FOR NOT RETURNING (excluding C and D above)	5														
1. Had Financial Difficulties	6	1	1							75	36				
2. Was Offered A Job	7	1	1							70	39				
3. Got Married Or Planned To Get Married	8									5	9				
4. Thought That School Work Was Not Relevant To The Real World	9	1	1							16	8				
5. Wanted To Get Practical Experience	10									5	3				
6. Was Failing Or Not Doing As Well As She/He Wanted	11		1							11	4				
7. Other, Specify: illness	12		1							20	36				
deceased	13									4					
personal/family problems	14									21	16				
military										4					
no reason given										35	15				

*Figures compiled from withdrawal petitions, fall semester, 1976

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STUDENTS NOT RETURNING*	LINE NO.	RACE/ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION AND SEX												
		BLACK (not of Hispanic origin)		AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE		ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER		HISPANIC		WHITE (not of Hispanic origin)		TOTAL		
		MALE (1)	FEMALE (2)	MALE (3)	FEMALE (4)	MALE (5)	FEMALE (6)	MALE (7)	FEMALE (8)	MALE (9)	FEMALE (10)	MALE (11)	FEMALE (12)	MALE AND FEMALE (13)
A. NUMBER NOT RETURNING (from sum of all lines "a" in OCR 2000B9) Check to indicate whether this is total number [ ] or total in sample [ ]	15									12	4			
B. NUMBER TO BE REPORTED HERE (same as A, unless sampling is used)	16													
C. STUDENTS WHO WITHDREW IN ORDER TO ENROLL IN ANOTHER POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION	17									1				
D. ACADEMIC FAILURE	18													
E. PRINCIPAL REASON FOR NOT RETURNING (excluding C and D above)	19													
1. Had Financial Difficulties	20									2				
2. Was Offered A Job	21									1				
3. Got Married or Planned To Get Married	22									1				
4. Thought That School Work Was Not Relevant To The Real World	23													
5. Wanted To Get Practical Experience	24									1				
6. Was Failing Or Not Doing As Well As She/He Wanted	25									1				
7. Other, Specify illness	26									1	1			
change in career goals										1	1			
personal/family problems	28									2	2			
no reason given										1				

*Figures compiled from withdrawal petitions, fall semester, 1976

APPENDIX B

M405 Arkansas Union
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
(501) 575-5003

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS · Office of Student Services

May 26, 1977

Dear Student:

We are writing from the Minority Advisor's Office to ask your help in determining what kinds of problems minority students face while at the University of Arkansas. Many students have left before receiving their degree--most of them in the freshman year. This indicates to us that the University needs to make some changes.

In the enclosed questionnaire we are asking you to help us understand what kinds of problems you experienced so that we can make changes for other minority students in the future. Your response will be very important in telling us what we need to do.

As you will notice, the questionnaire is being sent to three categories of minority students who have not returned. They are:

1. The student who has not returned before completing a degree program at the University of Arkansas but has enrolled at another institution;

2. The student who has not returned and has not re-enrolled elsewhere;

3. The student who has completed a degree (undergraduate or postgraduate).

Hopefully, this questionnaire is not too cumbersome and time-consuming. We would like to encourage you to complete and return it promptly. The results of your unique experiences may very well mean the difference between academic success and failure for minority students of the future. Your response will count!

All information derived from this questionnaire will be held in confidence.

Receipt of this questionnaire will in no way affect the status of the student who has re-enrolled at the University of Arkansas (or any other institution).

Respectfully yours,

Semon F. Thompson Jr.

Semon F. Thompson, Jr.
Assistant Dean of Students
for Minority Affairs

SFT/jp

The University of Arkansas is an Equal Opportunity Employer

June 15, 1977

Subject: Retention Study Questionaire

This letter is being written to you to encourage you to complete your student questionaire.

It is very important to our study that each person returns a completed questionaire.

Additionally, I would like to ask you to be certain to fill out all applicable areas of the questionaire.

I realize that questionaires are bothersome, and at times quite time consuming; however I feel this to be an important study, and would highly appreciate your cooperation.

If you have already returned your questionaire, please disregard this letter.

If I can be of any assistance please feel free to call collect at: 575-5004.

Yours sincerely,

Semon F. Thompson, Jr.

Semon F. Thompson, Jr.
Assistant Dean of Students

ST/jj

M405 Arkansas Union
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
(501) 575-5003

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS · Office of Student Services

MEMORANDUM

TO: Former Students

FROM: Semon F. Thompson, Jr.
Assistant Dean of Students

DATE: July 22, 1977

RE: Minority Student Retention Questionaire

It has become a matter of urgency that we have as many returned questionaires as possible. At this point we are short a few questionaires that would make our conclusions reliable.

If you would take the time to complete this questionaire, it would assist us in gaining information that has never been compiled before. An additional questionaire is being sent to you just in case the original has been misplaced or lost.

Again may I plead with you to cooperate with us in our effort.

SFT/jj

The University of Arkansas is an Equal Opportunity Employer